

August 1, 2009

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) – Today, veterans will start receiving improved college education benefits under the new GI Bill for the 21st Century (the “Post-9/11 GI Bill”). U.S. Congressman Jason Altmire (PA-04) was an original co-sponsor of this legislation, which was signed into law last year.

Under this law, Pennsylvanians who have completed more than three months of active duty service since September 11, 2001 can now qualify for a maximum educational benefit of \$23,846 a year, which includes \$12,164 for tuition, \$1,000 for books and \$1,186 per month for living expenses. This is a dramatic increase over the previous G.I. Bill’s maximum education benefit of \$9,990 a year.

“Starting today, the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill will make college more affordable for thousands of American veterans,” Altmire said. “For years, the real value of the G.I. Bill was eroded as the cost of college skyrocketed. Now, the original promise of the G.I. bill has been fully restored, and veterans will have the resources they need to cover the cost of a college education today. I am confident that just like the millions of American heroes who went to college on the G.I. bill in the 1940s, those who benefit from this new and improved G.I. Bill will help to strengthen our nation’s economy.”

The Post-9/11 G.I. Bill provides veterans with a maximum education benefit based on the cost of in-state tuition at the most expensive public university and the cost of living for their area. Reservists and servicemembers in the National Guard qualify for full educational benefits after serving three years and will receive a pro-rated portion of their benefits before that point. The children of the fallen can also use this bill to help pay for college.

For veterans who choose to attend a more expensive, private university, the bill creates a program to offer a government match, dollar-for-dollar, for any supplemental financial assistance that veterans receive from their school. Veterans will also have up to 15 years, rather than the 10 years currently allowed, to use their educational assistance. This will ensure men and women serving multiple deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan do not run out of time to use the bill’s benefits.

More than 65,000 Pennsylvanians have been deployed since 2001 and will qualify for assistance under the new G.I. Bill. Veterans can find out more information on how to access these benefits by calling their university’s veterans liaison’s office, calling 1-888-GIBILL-1, or going to www.gibill.va.gov.